

DETAILED ACTION

In response to the Request for Continued Examination (RCE) under 37 CFR 1.114 filed on 4/14/08. Claims 1 and 3 have been amended. Claims 1, 3-13 are pending in the current application.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 1 and 3-13 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Muir et al. (US 2005/0192090 A1) and further in view of Seitz (WO 00/49332).

Regarding claims 1 and 3-4, Muir teaches a gaming machine comprising: a variable display device in a form of a plurality of reels operative for rotating about a common axis of rotation, each reel having a plurality of symbols extending about an outer periphery of the reel (*ie: a standard reel device*) (*see element [16, 18] of Fig. 8 and the related description thereof*). Muir also teaches placing an electric display device in front of the variable display device in a forward direction (*ie: an electronic display in front of a reel apparatus*) (*see [14] and LCD [50] of Fig. 8 and the related description thereof*). Additionally, Muir teaches the different structures that comprise of the electronic display device which includes such things as a device frame, a flat display panel, an illumination device, as well as a shutter mechanism which has been treated to be analogous to the diffusion plate (*see shutter mechanism [76] of Fig. 8 and the related*

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description thereof). Thus Muir teaches an electronic display device that includes an electric display device frame, a flat electric display panel to display images and inherently has a back face because the objects in discussion are three dimensional objects (*see LCD [50] of Fig. 8 and the related description thereof*). Muir also discloses the electric display device to include a light guiding plate, a diffusion sheet, and a reflection plate (*ie: a shutter mechanism*) that is disposed apart yet adjacent to the back face and between the electric display panel and the variable display device. In further elaborating the position of the light guiding plate (*see lighting, illumination unit [82] [86] of Fig. 8 and the related description thereof*). Muir discloses the plate having an opposing pair of flat surfaces and a plurality of contiguous side faces extending therebetween and peripherally about the pair of flat surfaces so that the plate is able to guide light entered from at least one side face thereof to the back face of the electric display panel so as to irradiate the light. In addition, the light guiding plate has a plurality of openings corresponding to the plurality of reels for showing forward-most ones of the symbols therethrough (*see [76] of Fig. 8 and the related description thereof*). Muir also discloses an illumination device that is part of the game machine display device that comprises: an illumination device behind the electric display panel including a plurality of light sources aligned continuously and adjacent to at least one side face of the light guiding plate and wherein the electric display device frame has a frame peripheral portion and a frame front portion connected to and extending perpendicularly from the frame peripheral portion, the frame front portion defines a frame opening through the electric display device frame, the frame peripheral portion and the frame front portion form an electric display device receiving recess sized to receive the electric display panel, the light guiding plate and the illumination device such that the frame front portion and the electric display panel

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contact each other and the frame peripheral portion surrounds the electric display panel so that the illumination device, light guiding plate and plurality of light sources are disposed between at least a portion of the frame peripheral portion and the at least one side face of the light guiding plate (*see paragraph [0015-0020], [0027, 0029-0031, 0051-0052, 0061-0068]*). It is also noted that the shutter mechanism and the electric display device described in Muir contains the different apparatus' described in the claims when the shutter mechanism of Muir has been interpreted as accomplishing and providing the same structural features as the light guiding plate/reflection plate/diffusion sheet (*see shutter mechanism [76] of Fig. 8 and the related description thereof*). Although Muir does teach the illumination of the electric display from behind it does not specifically teach an illumination device having a plurality of light emitting diodes (*see paragraph 0051-0053*) aligned continuously along and adjacent to the at least one side face of the light guiding plate.

In an analogous display patent, Seitz teaches of a light guiding plate wherein the display is illuminated using a plurality of light emitting diodes aligned continuously along and adjacent to at least one side face of the light guiding plate (*see pg.4-5*). One would be motivated to incorporate the backlighting display of Seitz into that of Muir because known work in one field of endeavor may prompt variations of it for use in either the same field or a different one based on design incentives or other market forces if the variations are predictable to one of ordinary skill in the art. Therefore it would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to incorporate the light emitting diodes of Seitz with that of Muir to illuminate the electric display.

Regarding claim 5 and 7, Seitz teaches a gaming machine that comprises a diffusion sheet, wherein the plurality of light emitting diodes oppose a back face of the diffusion sheet (*see pg. 3-5*).

Regarding claim 6, Muir teaches a gaming machine that comprises a diffusion sheet wherein the diffusion sheet is disposed between the electric display and the illumination device (*see Fig. 8 and the related description thereof*).

Regarding claim 8, Muir teaches a gaming machine wherein the light guiding plate is disposed between the electric display device and the variable display device; the illumination device is disposed between the electric display device and the variable display device and the illumination device is operable for illuminating the electric display panel from therebehind via the light guiding plate (*see Fig. 8 and the related description thereof*).

Regarding claim 10, Muir teaches a gaming machine wherein the light guiding plate is disposed between the electric display device (*see Fig. 8 and the related description thereof*).

Regarding claim 11, Muir teaches a gaming machine wherein the electric display device displays the image in accordance with the progress of a game which is executed in the gaming machine and the light emitting diodes are controlled in accordance with the progress of the game which is executed in the gaming machine (*see Fig. 6-7 and the related description thereof*).

Regarding claims 12-13, Muir teaches an electric display device that displays the image in accordance with the progress of a game which is executed in the gaming machine and the light emitting diodes are controlled in accordance with the progress of the game which is executed in the gaming machine (*see 0027-0029, 0047-0053, [0061-0066]*).

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments filed 3/5/08 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive. With respect to arguments directed towards claim 4, as the applicant's representative has simply re-listed all of the limitations of the claim but has not provided any reasoning as to how the prior art of Muir is deficient of teaching those claimed elements as contested by the Examiner. As is the case that no concrete argument has been established the Examiner kindly refers to the rejection made towards claim 4 above. With respect to claims 1 and 3, the arguments are directed towards the amended limitations and have also already been addressed and considered in the rejection above.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communication from the examiner should be direct to Ryan Hsu whose telephone number is (571)-272-7148. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 8:30 AM - 5:00 PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Robert E Pezzuto can be reached at (571)-272-6996.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished

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RH

June 7, 2008

/Robert E Pezzuto/

Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 3714